

## Miya, Ryan@DTSC

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**From:** Saul Bloom <saulbloom@arcecology.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 22, 2014 8:32 AM  
**To:** 'Chesnutt, John'  
**Cc:** Miya, Ryan@DTSC; Steenson, Ross@Waterboards; Low, Tina@Waterboards  
**Subject:** RE: Former Contractors Claim Hunters Point Cleanup is Botched NBC Bay Area 5-19-14

Great, thanks. Please let me know what you guys find out.

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**From:** Chesnutt, John [<mailto:Chesnutt.John@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2014 6:00 PM  
**To:** Saul Bloom  
**Cc:** [rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov); 'Steenson, Ross@Waterboards'; [TLow@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:TLow@waterboards.ca.gov)  
**Subject:** Re: Former Contractors Claim Hunters Point Cleanup is Botched NBC Bay Area 5-19-14

Saul, I've asked Rob Terry (EPA's rad guy) to let me know what he thinks about the scanner levels. I don't know what we have in terms of scanner info and other docs, but we'll be discussing at upcoming meetings.

John

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**From:** Saul Bloom <[saulbloom@arcecology.org](mailto:saulbloom@arcecology.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2014 5:24:34 PM  
**To:** Chesnutt, John  
**Cc:** [rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov); 'Steenson, Ross@Waterboards'; [TLow@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:TLow@waterboards.ca.gov)  
**Subject:** RE: Former Contractors Claim Hunters Point Cleanup is Botched NBC Bay Area 5-19-14

John,

Thanks for the response.

We all know how these things go. Three years after getting fired someone speaks to the media about an alleged problem. Could be real, could not. As you know I am somewhat sympathetic to whistle blowing consultants – especially if they lose their jobs or contracts over raising legitimate public health, safety and interest issues. On the other hand I've heard enough BS of this kind to fill a couple of lifetimes.

There are two elements of this that I do find worrisome.

First, is that the timing does seem to coincide with the TI Rad issue with Shaw. While it's two different contractors; everyone talks, staff can be interchangeable, and the problem – if there is one – seems to me to be as much about Navy oversight/ management as it is contractor performance. It's hard to know when someone is lying to you without independent evidence but that is what oversight is all about. It's possible that Tetra Tech acted without portfolio, it is also possible it was following Navy instructions. If Tetra Tech was following Navy instructions, did the same set of instructions exist for TI?

Second, is the allegation that the scanners were recalibrated to go off at 8.5x background instead of 6 true? At least this is easily documented. If they were, was that a decision discussed with the Navy or internal to Tetra Tech? Did the BCT discuss it? How serious is it – in terms of exposure, disposal, transport, public and driver safety.

It does seem to me that these two questions are at the core of the problem – if there is one. And while the NRC may be the right entity to look into some of the rad related issues, there is a larger point as well. As you know Tetra Tech is a huge DoD cleanup contractor. If Tetra Tech deliberately mislead the Navy it would raise all sorts of flags about other projects they are involved in.

The complaints raised do seem to warrant some sort of evaluation/ investigation – especially in light of the TI experience.

Thanks again for getting back to me. I'd appreciate getting copies of the scanner calibration instructions and any other related documents.

Cheers,  
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**From:** Chesnutt, John [<mailto:Chesnutt.John@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2014 4:23 PM  
**To:** Saul Bloom; [rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov); Steenson, Ross@Waterboards  
**Subject:** RE: Former Contractors Claim Hunters Point Cleanup is Botched NBC Bay Area 5-19-14

Saul, Thanks for the article. I watched the news coverage Monday night. I also don't understand why this issue wasn't highlighted some time ago. When I called the Navy to discuss, they said it was old news and these employees sued (tetra tech, I presume) a couple years ago. I believe the NRC is still investigating.

We've heard nothing since it aired Monday.

John

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**From:** Saul Bloom [<mailto:saalbloom@arcecolology.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 19, 2014 6:34 PM  
**To:** Chesnutt, John; [rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:rmiya@dtsc.ca.gov); Steenson, Ross@Waterboards  
**Subject:** Former Contractors Claim Hunters Point Cleanup is Botched NBC Bay Area 5-19-14

Hi,

Thought you might want to see the attached news report to air on NBC Bay Area tonight. I just learned about this from a friend. If the statements are true on the face they are disturbing.

What doesn't make sense to me is why the individuals involved didn't contact other regulatory agencies or NGOs and waited this long to speak up.

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<http://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/Former-Contractors-Claim-Hunters-Point-Cleanup-is-Botched-259871511.html>

# Former Contractors Claim Hunters Point Cleanup is Botched

**High-level technicians claim they documented numerous violations that put public health and safety at risk**

By Vicky Nguven, Liz Wagner and Felipe Escamilla

| Monday, May 19, 2014 | Updated 6:09 PM PDT



Radiation safety personnel who worked on the toxic cleanup of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco say the remediation is not being conducted properly. They are speaking out to the Investigative Unit after raising red flags to their supervisors and to government regulators.

Taxpayers have spent nearly a quarter of a billion dollars on the toxic cleanup of Hunters Point, a prime piece of land along the southeastern shore of San Francisco. The former naval shipyard, which was once used as a research and testing lab for nuclear weapons, is now undergoing a

renaissance. The city plans to turn the 800-acre site into a development mecca complete with new parks, retail stores and homes.

It is a massive project that's decades in the making, but two high-level former technicians with intimate knowledge of the remediation effort say the cleanup is being botched and that the health and safety of the public is at risk because of it. Both say they wouldn't live in or even visit the development planned for the site. In February, the Investigative Unit exposed that current workers also question the radiological cleanup of Hunters Point.

- **Workers Allege Hunters Point Dirt Needs to be Screened for Radiation**

"It's playing Russian Roulette with the health and wellbeing of the general public, the people that handle it, and the environment," said Bert Bowers, a former radiation safety officer hired by Tetra Tech, the Navy contractor overseeing the cleanup of Hunters Point. He was tasked with maintaining compliance with federal mandates relevant to radiation protection and the management of radioactive materials.

Bowers has worked at nuclear plants and radiological remediation sites across the country, and even worked as a radiation protection officer with the U.S. Department of Energy. He said compared to other projects, what he experienced at Hunters Point "was the most egregious violation of standard protocol" he had encountered in his 35-year career.

Bowers claims he witnessed violations including the improper storage of radiation detection devices and inadequate signage and barriers to keep the public away from potentially radioactive areas that hadn't been cleared.

"Someone from the general public could walk in, unabated, get it [contaminants] on their clothes, their person, eat the food," Bowers said. "They could have had an intake of radioactive contaminants and it would never have been caught or avoided."

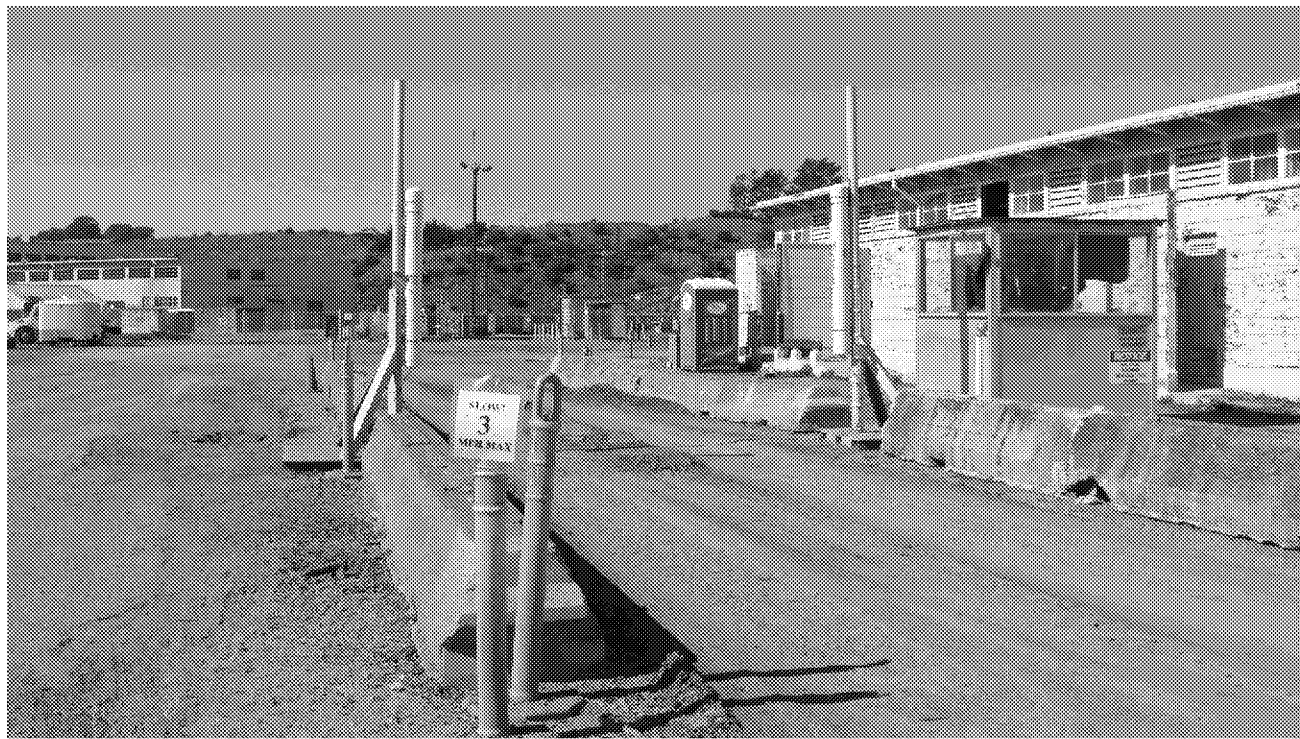
In December 2010, when the project was supposed to be in the middle of a two-week shutdown, Bowers took photos of what he says are trucks and tanks hauling dirt and contaminated water from San Francisco and through the Bay Area without being tested for radiation or cleared for disposal. He detailed his findings in emails to Tetra Tech managers.

"Those Baker Tanks were posted with radiological contents and radioactive water," Bowers said. "Surveys of water results had never come across my desk for release. Additionally, anything that leaves the site of that magnitude is supposed to go to a radiation detection device as part of a base wide procedure requirement established by the Navy."

He said company culture changed from one in which safety was paramount to one that favored production and cost-savings. Ultimately, Bowers said the public can't be confident that soil leaving Hunters Point and the remaining soil to be used as backfill underneath the planned development—is radiation-free.

"It's been botched," he said. "It's been botched."

Standard operating procedure dictates that before a truck leaves the job site it must pass through a “portal monitor” to get screened for radiological contamination. The sensors would determine whether the soil was clean or radioactive, and ultimately where the dirt was to be disposed of.



Portal monitor at Hunters Point.

Internal manuals obtained by the NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit show that the sensitivity of the portal monitor was decreased below the manufacturer’s specifications. The “detector alarm set point” was raised to “8.5 deviations above background” in 2011 from the original “6 deviations above background” in 2008.

Susan Andrews, a radiation safety technician who worked at Hunters Point under Bowers, claims that change in protocol lowered the amount of radiation the portal monitor would detect.

“It says they are trying to get dirt out that’s contaminated that should never have left Hunters Point,” Andrews said. “It’s not right. They can’t be shipping potentially contaminated soil as clean landfill into the City of San Francisco. This can’t be done.”

Even with the decrease in the sensitivity of the portal monitor, Andrews said she documented trucks that left the site with potentially radioactive material that “never passed the portal monitor.” She began tracking the trucks that left Hunters Point in a logbook, which she shared with the Investigative Unit. According to her journal, in just one week in October 2011 more than 70 trucks “failed the portal monitor” but were still “released to go off site.”

Both Andrews and Bowers say they witnessed other questionable behavior from the failure of workers to properly secure potentially radioactive areas from public access to the promotion of unqualified personnel to senior, safety-sensitive roles.

Andrews said she raised questions to one of her superiors but he told her to “hush up” and “take the money and go home when the project” is complete.

“I don’t care where I live,” Andrews said. “Wrongdoing is wrongdoing. We’re all Americans. It shouldn’t be done.”

After sharing their concerns within the company, they took them to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and submitted 30 formal complaints between them to the agency.

The Investigative Unit obtained NRC reports that indicate regulators traveled to Hunters Point for three days in March 2011 and January 2012 to investigate Bowers’ and Andrews’ claims. The reports show that in each instance, inspectors were unable to substantiate the allegations.

Bowers believes that the NRC did not investigate his claims thoroughly enough. Andrews says she feels betrayed by the NRC because she believed the agency has the authority to put a halt to the violations she says she witnessed.

“As an American, I believed in the NRC,” she said. “I’m not so sure I believe in them anymore.”

Shortly after Bowers reported his concerns to the NRC in January 2011, he lost his job with Tetra Tech. Andrews also lost her job after she contacted federal regulators in October 2011. Both claim it was retaliation.

Bowers and Andrews along with two other former workers at Hunters Point are suing Tetra Tech because they contend they were fired for raising concerns. Tetra Tech has filed an answer denying those allegations.

Both Tetra Tech and the NRC declined interview requests by the Investigative Unit. Navy representatives also declined interview requests saying it is “inappropriate for the Navy to comment on ongoing litigation between third parties.”

[Read the Navy's statement here.](#)

When asked if they would live at Hunters Point in the future, both Bowers and Andrews responded that they believe the site can be cleaned up correctly eventually but the way it stands now, “absolutely not.”

“I wouldn’t go there, I wouldn’t take my grandchildren there, I wouldn’t walk my dog there,” Andrews said. “It’s a beautiful area and it can be beautiful once it’s cleaned up, but it’s not being cleaned up right.”

## Hunters Point

The decommissioned Hunters Point Naval Shipyard includes a federal superfund site that includes about 800 acres of land and water. For years, the Navy has been decontaminating the site for eventual transfer to the city of San Francisco. The area is divided into parcels, most of which have not yet been fully cleaned and transferred.

Map by [Scott Pham](#). Parcel boundaries are necessarily approximate. More information at the [EPA](#).

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### *Parcel Status*

Hover over a parcel

Already Transferred

To Be Transferred This Year

To Be Transferred in the Future

[Leaflet](#) | Tiles from MapBox

If you have a tip for the Investigative Unit email [theunit@nbcbayarea.com](mailto:theunit@nbcbayarea.com) or call 888-996-TIPS.